United Nations A/ES-10/580–S/2013/84

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
11 February 2013

Original: English

General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-eighth year

Identical letters dated 8 February 2013 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I write to convey our rising concerns about Israel's illegal policies and measures in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem — the territory that constitutes the State of Palestine. The persistence of these destructive, oppressive and unlawful actions by the occupying Power is exacerbating the critical humanitarian situation of the Palestinian civilian population and further poisoning the atmosphere and heightening tensions between the two sides. Moreover, such actions undermine the collective efforts being exerted, regionally and internationally, to overcome the deadlock and to launch a credible political process, at the same time that they threaten the viability of the two-State solution to the conflict.

In the recent period, Israel, the occupying Power, has continued its military raids of Palestinian villages, towns and cities, arresting and detaining dozens more Palestinian civilians, including children, who continue to be terrorized by the Israeli practice of seizing children from their homes in the middle of the night and subjecting them to forced interrogations and detention. Recent arrest raids have included the arrest on Monday, 4 February, of 23 Palestinians, among them three democratically elected officials. This was followed by the arrest of another eight Palestinians two days later. We condemn these Israeli actions, which constitute blatant violations of international law, and call for the cessation of the arrest and detention of Palestinian civilians.

In this connection, we reiterate our grave concern regarding the plight of hunger-striking prisoners, among them Samer Issawi, whose life is in imminent danger, as well as Ayman Sharawna, Tareq Qedan and Jafar Ezzedine, who have been on long-term hunger strikes in protest of their captivity by Israel and whose plight we underscored in our letter of 24 January 2013. We call upon the international community to act, consistent with international law, to compel Israel, the occupying Power, to cease its inhumane treatment of Palestinian prisoners and to

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release those hunger-striking prisoners and all other Palestinian prisoners being held unlawfully.

Moreover, we stress our concern regarding the deplorable conditions in which Palestinians are being imprisoned by Israel, the occupying Power. This includes the systematic physical and psychological maltreatment of prisoners, including such as that which occurred today at Nafha prison, where occupying forces attacked and beat Palestinian prisoners and destroyed their belongings.

Israel, the occupying Power, also continues its illegal settlement campaign throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and its settlers continue their lawlessness and incitement, causing injury to civilians and damage to property. On 31 January, reports revealed that the Israeli Government had advanced plans for the construction of another 346 settlement units in an area south of Occupied East Jerusalem and north of Bethlehem, where Israeli settlement activities have been fervent. Israel also continues its assault on Muslim heritage and holy sites, with reports on 6 February of the demolition of ancient Islamic structures in the plaza of the Western Wall of the Old City near Al-Aqsa Mosque. Such provocations, along with actions such as the forced entry yesterday at Al-Haram Al-Sharif of more than 100 Israeli occupying soldiers and dozens of extremist settlers, threaten to totally destabilize the already fragile situation on the ground and require the urgent attention of the international community.

At this time, we stress the importance of the report recently issued by the Human Rights Council-mandated international fact-finding mission which investigated the implications of Israeli settlements on the human rights of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The report reaffirms the illegality of Israel's settlement activities, as previously determined by numerous United Nations resolutions and the July 2004 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice. It is imperative that serious follow-up be undertaken of the conclusions and recommendations made regarding this illegal practice and the far-reaching negative consequences it is having on the Palestinian human rights situation, on the demographic and geographic situation on the ground and on the prospects for realizing the two-State solution.

In this regard, the occupying Power has also persisted with its demolition of Palestinian homes and properties and confiscation of Palestinian land, forcibly displacing more Palestinian civilians in violation of international humanitarian law. On 5 February, the Israeli occupying forces destroyed a two-storey home in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Beit Hanina, once again under the pretext of the lack of a building permit. The house, constructed six years ago, was home to four Palestinian families, comprising 30 people, including several children and elderly individuals, now rendered homeless by this inhumane, unlawful act of destruction.

This was preceded a day earlier by the demolition of four buildings and a sewage network in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Silwan, which has been heavily targeted by Israel in the furtherance of its colonization schemes, and by the issuance of demolition notices to at least 200 Palestinian families in the Fuheidat neighbourhood east of the village of Anata. Also, the Israeli occupying forces on 6 February demolished a water well in the Al-Fawwar refugee camp south of Al-Khalil and on 7 February demolished a home in the village of Al-Khas, east of Bethlehem, and a municipal building in the village of Beit Awla, west of Al-Khalil.

Palestinian civilians continue to engage in peaceful protest, a right to which they are entitled under international law, against this illegal Israeli colonization of their land and destruction of their property. This includes the establishment of another protest village in Burin, south of Nablus, on 2 February, against Israeli settlement expansion in the area, similar to the Bab Al-Shams and Bab Al-Karamah villages that were established as an expression of non-violent protest against Israeli settlement plans. Disrespecting the right to peaceful protest, Israel persists with excessive force, including live ammunition, against Palestinian demonstrators, and forcibly dismantled the Burin protest village, even allowing settlers at the site to attack the Palestinian demonstrators.

We reiterate our calls on the international community, particularly the Security Council, to give all of these critical matters due attention and to act, including via practical measures, to compel Israel, the occupying Power, to abide by international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. The situation of Palestinian prisoners is grave, and Israel must be compelled to respect international humanitarian and human rights law as it applies to them. Moreover, Israel must be urgently compelled to halt all settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to abide forthwith with all of its legal obligations, including those under the Fourth Geneva Convention, without exception. Stopping this illegitimate, destructive campaign is imperative for salvaging the two-State solution and fostering the trust and environment necessary for its achievement and the achievement of a just, lasting and peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 452 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 24 January 2013 (A/ES-10/579-S/2013/52), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations